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ABSTRACT

Presented are three brochures--for employers, colleges, and prospective employees respectively--that collectively explain Britain's efforts to simplify the nation's current vocational qualification system and to set up new national vocational qualifications (NVQs) for all occupational areas by 1991. The new NVQs are based on the achievement of standards of performance required by industry and commerce and are awarded by organizations approved by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Awarded for competent performance in work activities, NVQs are assessed in the workplace whenever possible. Credit for parts of an NVQ are gained in the form of units that can accumulate through on-the-job-training, college courses, experience, distance learning, and private study taken at a pace that suits the individual. Traditional barriers to certification (where or how competence was gained, how long it took, or the age at which it was reached or is held) are considered irrelevant. Colleges in the further and higher education sector will develop assessment methods and complementary learning opportunities through traditional and modular training, open learning packages, and computer-assisted and experiential learning. They will also provide consultancy and guidance services to help design and run effective assessment, training, and staff development programs for those in industry and education. Among the benefits of the new system are improved economic performance, increased worker motivation, easier recruitment of staff, clear routes of progression, and fewer barriers to qualifications. (CML)

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NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

WHAT IT MEANS FOR COLLEGES

WHAT'S IN IT FOR EMPLOYERS

WHAT THEY MEAN FOR YOU
A GUIDE FOR THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

National Council on Vocational Qualifications
London, England

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR EMPLOYERS?

NCVQ

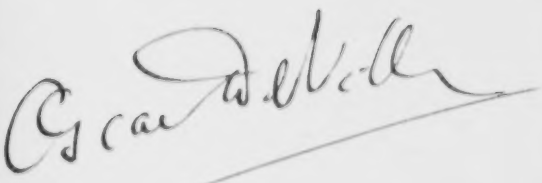
"In a highly competitive world, any country has to realise to the full the potential of its workforce and to provide real opportunity for people to gain the necessary skills and knowledge required at work – at all levels from senior management to junior trainee.

We all have a part to play in this. Improved competence at work helps to provide better quality goods and services, and secure improvements to economic performance.

Recognising that vocational qualifications have a direct influence on the volume and quality of education and training, the Government set up the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to develop a simple, coherent system of qualifications across all occupational levels.

This gives a golden opportunity to ensure that qualifications are set to nationally recognised standards that meet the practical needs of business and industry. We turn to each industry for these standards.

The Government has asked that the new system be in place by 1991. This is an enormous task which we can achieve only with the full co-operation of industry and business. But the benefits to commerce and individual alike will be considerable."



H. G. DeVille CBE.
NCVQ Chairman.

THE PROBLEMS WE ARE FACING.

Only 40 per cent of the nation's workforce hold any sort of qualifications that relate directly to their employment, far less than our major overseas competitors.

Over 1.75 million certificates are awarded each year. While many are useful to employers, some are out of touch with the real needs of the workplace.

Some occupations have a mass of overlapping qualifications, while in other sectors of importance to our economy there are none.

Access to qualifications needs to improve and progression between qualifications must be made readily available.

Adults as well as junior trainees need a means by which the standards can be obtained over a period of time, through a flexible system of credit accumulation.

Britain's present system of vocational qualifications is failing to meet our needs. By allowing this situation to continue, the whole economy suffers. We are not producing enough qualified people for industry and commerce, particularly where the requirements in employment are changing rapidly.

AND THE PEOPLE TACKLING THEM.

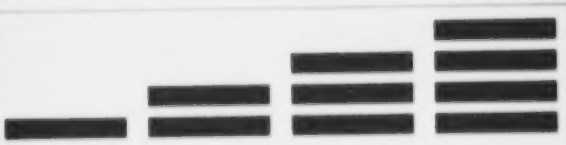
The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was set up by the Government as a registered company in October 1986. Its aims are to:

- improve vocational qualifications by basing them on the standards of competence required in employment.
- establish a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) framework which is comprehensible and comprehensive and facilitates access, progression and continued learning.

Qualifications which meet our criteria are given the title National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and carry the NCVQ insignia, a sign that someone holding such a qualification will be useful to an organisation.

In establishing our hallmarking system, NCVQ will continue to work closely with employers' organisations,

trade unions and those in education and training to ensure that qualifications offered by awarding bodies reflect the standards of competence required by business and industry.



NCVQ only accredit qualifications which meet employment needs. The NVQ framework is currently based on four levels and qualifications already accredited include some awards in agriculture, electrical contracting, hotel and catering, motor vehicle repair and maintenance and retail travel.

Employers represented on the NCVQ and appointed by the Secretary of State for Employment include:

Oscar DeVille	Chairman, Mever International plc
Sheila Forbes	Personnel Director, Storehouse plc
Harvey Davies	Executive Director Administration, British Aerospace plc
Ron Shepherd	Manager, Education, Training and Personnel Services, Ford Motor Company Ltd.
Steve Shirley	Founder Director, F I Group plc
George Wycherley	Director, Motherwell Bridge Fabricators Ltd.

"Business today needs better educated and better qualified people. If Britain is to be in a position to compete effectively in worldwide markets, we must have people with a drive for producing quality work in a range of new areas. We must recognise and develop expertise in new areas of knowledge which span additional educational boundaries.

The world of knowledge is now moving so fast that much will be redundant by the turn of the century. That is why I welcome the NCVQ aim to go beyond basic knowledge and to recognise individual competence through a wide range of vocational qualifications."

LORD KING OF WARTNABY, CHAIRMAN, BRITISH AIRWAYS PLC

THE PRACTICAL BENEFITS EMPLOYERS CAN EXPECT.

1 Improved profitability and economic performance through education and training provision which is more relevant to employment and better structured to meet the needs of industry and commerce.

2 Development of a better trained, competent, qualified workforce, more able to adapt and transfer skill, knowledge and understanding to meet new situations.

3 Increased co-operation between employers, training organisations and awarding bodies, and improved cross-sector standards and qualifications.

4 Increased individual motivation and awareness of standards.

5 Easier identification and recruitment of competent staff through NVQs which indicate what people are able to do.

6 Clear goals set for continued learning and staff development, providing the opportunity for improvement in corporate performance.

"Different qualifications need to be linked so that staff can progress continually, develop continuously and work flexibly. I welcome the NCVQ and wish it every success."

"The success of our industry will depend on increasing the competence of our employees at all levels. A system of nationally recognised qualifications based on different standards of competence will be an important cornerstone in the preparation of the future workforce."

"As British engineering becomes increasingly dependent on developments on an international basis, then the need for training will grow. An initiative such as that by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications must be welcomed by all employers in British industry."

"We very much welcome the initiative by the NCVQ to establish qualifications that are relevant to the workplace. I'm sure employers will welcome the opportunity both to rationalise what is something of an alphabet soup of competing and, to some extent, difficult to understand qualifications."

"I fully support the objectives of the NCVQ. Employers can only benefit from changes which base assessment and accreditation more accurately on competence and performance at work, to which knowledge and understanding will, of course, contribute. All this requires employers to rethink their own needs and to share with the National Council in initiating change."

If you want to see as well as hear more about NVQs, send for the 14 minute introductory video, Qualified for Success, price £8.00. Or write for more information to the NCVQ, 222 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ.

For more personal involvement, contact your local industry training organisation, employers' trade association or the CBI.

This brochure is the first of a series, 'What's in it for Employers?', 'What's in it for You?'

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications,
222 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ. Telephone: 01-387 9898.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR COLLEGES

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

Improved education and training are essential to us as a nation if we are to increase our competitiveness in world markets and enable people to develop their abilities to the full. In particular, we need to increase the amount, relevance, and quality of vocational education and training.

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) is playing its part in meeting this need by establishing a new framework within which vocational qualifications will be better understood and valued, and free from unnecessary restrictions on the ways in which they are gained. Qualifications which meet the NCVQ's criteria will be accredited as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

The NCVQ is aiming to ensure that:

- qualifications are based on the achievement of standards of performance required by industry and commerce.
- access to qualifications is opened up by the removal of unnecessary restrictions on methods and periods of learning, and age barriers.
- clear routes of progression are provided within the NVQ framework to encourage individuals to improve their competence at all stages in their working lives.
- the provision of qualifications is simplified to achieve a more sensible and coherent system which will be understood by all.
- work is undertaken with awarding bodies to develop a national system for credit accumulation through the National Record of Vocational Achievements, which will enable people to meet the requirements for NVQs in stages and at a pace which suits them.

WHO WILL PROVIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR NVQs?

Many more people need to be properly qualified for the work they do. At present only forty per cent of people at work have vocational qualifications which are relevant to their occupations. So there is a huge job to be done by all those involved in delivering the high quality education, training and assessment leading to the award of NVQs.

Colleges, company training departments, industry training organisations and others providing vocational education and training will play the leading role in ensuring that industry's requirements for relevant skills, knowledge and understanding, on which NVQs are based, are met.

The need to ensure that qualifications are based on the ability to perform in employment will promote increased collaboration between colleges and employers.

Many colleges have experience of working with industry: the developments planned by the NCVQ will help to strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones.

Providers of vocational education and training will need to increase the variety of ways in which people can prepare themselves for and improve their performance in employment.

The message is clear: trainees and their employers will increasingly look to you to provide what they need, when and where they need it, and in ways which suit them. The key to the effectiveness of your response will be flexibility.

WHAT WILL BE THE ROLE OF COLLEGES?

Colleges in the Further and Higher Education sector are major providers of learning opportunities for qualifications. You make a contribution which is valued by individuals and employers, and you have the experience, expertise and resources to develop and expand this contribution within the NVQ framework. The new NVQs will require the development of assessment methods which recognise competence as defined by industry, and the parallel development of complementary learning opportunities. For these reasons colleges are needed to play a major role in providing:

- high-quality learning opportunities through modular training, open learning packages, computer assisted learning, and experiential learning, as well as through traditional courses.
- consultancy and guidance services to help design and run effective training and assessment programmes.
- staff development and training for those in industry and education.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OPPORTUNITIES?

The establishment of the NVQ framework and related developments will create opportunities for colleges to provide a high-quality and flexible training and certification service. Success in taking advantage of these opportunities will be gained by developing attitudes which reward enterprise and support new ways of working. This will involve making the right contacts with employers to clarify and define their needs, and ensuring that the assessment of trainees' competence is conducted rigorously.

The challenge is to establish not only a 'learning society' in which self-improvement is a natural process, but a qualified society, in which individuals, employers and the community at large know and value what has been achieved through qualifications.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS FOR COLLEGES?

The role of colleges in delivering NVQs can lead to:

- more people seeking opportunities to learn and to develop their abilities in a system free from unnecessary barriers.
- opportunities to tailor arrangements to individual needs, with the possibility of qualifications being obtained through credit accumulation.
- a higher profile for the Further and Higher Education sector, and increased recognition of its key role in providing high-quality education and training.
- the improved development and use of the skills of college staff, and of college services generally.
- more influence over the training and qualifying process, through involvement in a strengthened partnership with employers, training organisations and awarding bodies.

"The developments embodied in the tasks given to the NCVQ offer the opportunity to provide exciting new openings for employees and a better qualified workforce for employers. Colleges have a vital role to play in these developments because of the expertise already present within them. The commitment, quality and vision of staff is an absolute necessity if the exciting possibilities of National Vocational Qualifications are to be realised."

GERALD BRINSDON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

"The establishment of agreed definitions of what counts as competent performance in a vocational role will be extremely helpful to learners and staff involved in Further and Higher Education. It will set clear targets at which to aim.

We need the ability to design and implement learning programmes which will enable individuals to reach higher levels of performance.

This is the challenge for providers: one which I believe FE could be uniquely well-placed to meet."

GEOFF STANTON, CHIEF OFFICER
FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

"The work of NCVQ will mean new challenges for colleges at a time when the pattern of vocational education is already subject to change. Many of the Further Education service's long standing ambitions are shared by NCVQ.

We jointly seek more and better opportunities for education and training, wider access to learning, a better deal for adults, returners and those with special needs; we wish to see training opportunities and qualifications available in employment sectors where hitherto these have been lacking.

Colleges are well on the way to managing many of the changes implied in this leaflet and in the NCVQ process generally; they must keep alert to the on-going reform of qualifications.

They will then be well placed to maintain and improve their role as the foremost providers of qualification programmes."

CLIVE BEAN, PRINCIPAL, SWINDON COLLEGE

"Further Education colleges can only welcome NCVQ's attempts to make the system of vocational qualifications more accessible, more understandable and more attractive to potential students, without, of course, underestimating the difficulties involved in moving over to competency-based qualifications."

VINCE HALL, VICE PRINCIPAL
AIREDALE AND WHARFEDALE COLLEGE

"NCVQ presents colleges with an opportunity to be seized. We know that we are underqualified as a society. We know, too, that the pressures on industry and commerce in an increasingly competitive world will demand better educated and better trained personnel.

Together colleges and the business world can forge a partnership of immense and lasting strength through NCVQ."

[illegible]

"Colleges already do a great deal to prepare thousands of people for working life and to enable them to emerge with a recognised qualification. Yet much more needs to be done. A new marriage of education and training is needed, if we are to have a workforce which is both competent in the fullest sense, and able to go on learning.

NCVQ's new approach to vocational qualifications places great stress on colleges and employers working together. It also offers great opportunities. NCVQ and employers will look to colleges for support.

I urge them to give it."

[illegible]

Further information:

If you want to see as well as hear more about NVQs, send for the 14 minute video, "Providing for the future – NCVQ and Further Education," price £6.90 including VAT, or a video explaining the National Record of Vocational Achievement: "A Passport to Success," priced at £6.90 including VAT and free leaflet. Or write for more information to the NCVQ, 222 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ.

This brochure is the second in a series, aimed at employers, colleges, the professions and people at work.

Coombe Lodge Report Volume 20 No 5 "NCVQ and Further Education" by Vince Hall (published by the Further Education Staff College 1987).

The National Council for Vocational Qualifications,
222 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ. Telephone: 01-387 9898.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

What they mean for You

– A GUIDE FOR THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

What is it all about?

Vocational qualifications are those relevant to employment. Only a minority of Britain's workforce currently holds relevant qualifications.

Most people find the qualification system complicated and confusing. The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) has been set up to simplify the qualification system and ensure its relevance. If a qualification meets the national standards required for employment, it is given the **NCVQ seal of approval.**

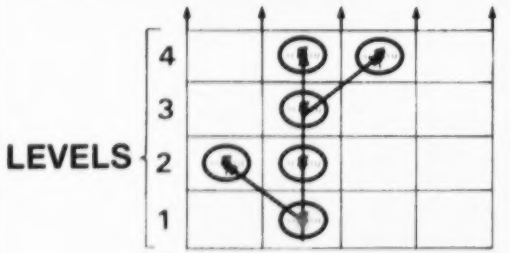
Each National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) will cover an **area** or work, at a specific **level** of achievement and fit into a simple **framework.** So, the area of work in which somebody is qualified will be clear, together with their level of achievement. The framework will make clear the paths of progression to higher levels and any opportunities for transfer to other areas of work.

NVQs are awarded for competent performance in work activities and where possible assessed in the workplace. NCVQ's aim is to open up access to qualifications for individuals. Traditional barriers will be removed, such as irrelevant requirements in terms of **where** and **how** you became competent, **how long** it took you, or **your age.**

NCVQ does not itself award certificates, but decides which organisations are approved to offer qualifications within the framework.

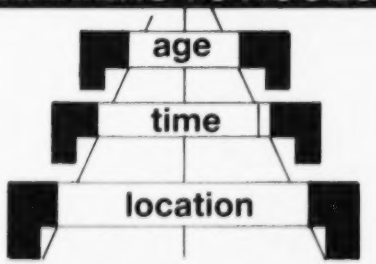
SEAL OF APPROVAL

NVQ FRAMEWORK



e.g. engineering, catering, accounting, agriculture

BARRIERS TO ACCESS



It doesn't matter where or how you learnt your skill, how long it took you or your age. An NVQ recognises your achievement.

Gaining Recognition

In today's competitive world qualifications, more than ever, help to open doors to employment, and provide a measure of security.

You may already possess the skills, knowledge and understanding, and the ability to apply them in employment, which would merit the award of an NVQ. If not, the NVQ framework ensures access for those who wish to develop their competence and gain recognition.

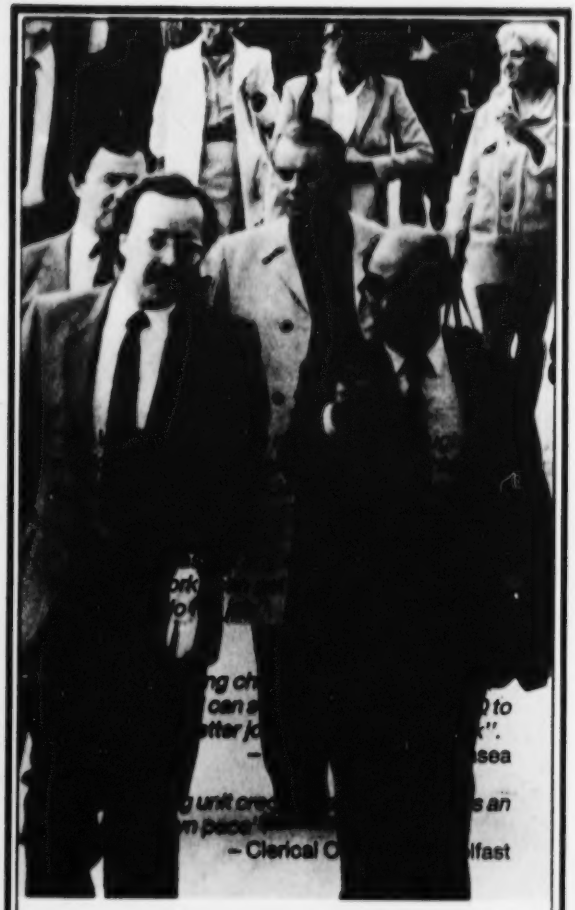
Everyone has the opportunity to gain National Vocational Qualifications.

Meeting your needs

In the past, people have been put off trying to obtain qualifications because of barriers such as the amount of time taken to acquire them. NCVQ is making the system more flexible to meet people's needs, so that competence acquired in different ways can lead to NVQs. For example, qualifications can often be gained by assessment at your normal place of work without you having to go to an examination centre.

NCVQ is also promoting a system of credit accumulation. This means that you can gain credit for parts of an NVQ called **Units**. With Units, you can build up your qualification at a pace that suits your needs and circumstances, through various methods

- on the job training
- college courses
- experience
- distance learning
- private study



NCVQ is supported by both sides of industry and the TUC welcomes the initiative for the opportunities it provides its members to gain nationally recognised qualifications reflecting the competences required in jobs across all industries and services.

NCVQ was set up in 1986 to ensure that there are National Vocational Qualifications for all occupational areas by 1991.

Benefits of NVQs

1. Qualifications which are **NATIONALLY** recognised by employers as **RELEVANT** to employment.

2. Qualifications within a system which is **ACCESSIBLE** to everyone.

3. Qualifications which provide **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** for all who achieve the required national standards of performance.

4. Qualifications which fit into a simple **FRAMEWORK**, clearly showing the career routes open to an individual.

5. Qualifications which are based on **COMPETENCE** – which is recognised no matter how it was acquired.

If you would like to know more about National Vocational Qualifications, contact one of the following:

- your local college of further education
- your training manager
- your Training Commission area office
- your local authority careers office
- NCVQ, 222 Euston Road, London NW1 2BZ